

# LEAVE WORK AT WORK

## WA STATE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

APRIL 2016

Work life balance. It isn't just about balancing schedules; it's also about leaving the worries and stress at work and not thinking about it when you leave for the day. If you're thinking about emails, project deadlines, and conversations at the water cooler, here are some tips to help leave work at work and decompress.



- **Find a hobby.** Find an activity you enjoy that can take your mind off of work. It doesn't matter if it's crocheting, volunteering at Boys and Girls Club, or reading as long as it's something that can take your mind away from the day to day work stress.
- **Say an affirmation.** When you leave work for the day tell yourself an affirmation, such as "Let it Go!!" to help establish good work life balance boundaries.
- **Exercise.** If you've had a stressful day, after work is a great time to exercise. Not only does it improve strength and burn calories, but it also helps to clear your mind.
- **Hanging out after work** is a great way to unwind with coworkers, friends, and family members, but limit the discussion about work. If work comes up, shift the conversation to the positive aspects going on at work or fun activities going on in your lives.
- **Practice mindfulness.** If you find yourself constantly thinking about things you could've said or done differently, practicing mindfulness helps to focus on the here and now. This helps you stay in the present moment and keeps your attention on your current surroundings.
- **Create a ritual.** Changing out of your work clothes or washing your hands with soap and water are simple ways to put yourself in the mindset of the separation between work and home. It tells your brain it's time to relax and enjoy some down time.
- **Journal about goals and dreams.** Writing when you get home about something besides work may help to clear the mind and reduce stress levels,
- **Schedule fun time and relaxation.** Use your calendar to make this a priority, just like you would a meeting. It might seem odd at first to schedule "take a walk" or "play guitar here" into your calendar, but it could help you disconnect from work stress and stick with a plan.
- **Try thought blocking.** When you find yourself thinking about work, acknowledge the feelings, speak kindly to them and release them with "it's not work time now" and shift your focus away from it.
- **Contact your EAP.** Your EAP will be happy to discuss a plan for managing stress. Call for a confidential, no cost appointment. **1-877-313-4455.**